NO. 25
APR 1991
$1.50 US
$1.85 CAN
80p UK

In which the Dead Return;
and Charles Rowland
concludes his education.

SUGGESTED
FOR MATURE
READERS

the

SANDMAN™

SEASON OF MISTS 4

gaiman wagner jones III

SEASON of MISTS Chapter 4

In which the dead return; and Charles Rowland concludes his education.

NEIL GAIMAN, Writer
MATT WAGNER, Penciller
MALCOLM JONES III, Inker
DANIEL VOZZO, Colorist
TODD KLEIN, Letterer
TOM PEYER, Assist. Editor
KAREN BERGER, Editor

DECEMBER 1990.

ROWLAND? ARE YOU AWAKE YET?

SANDMAN

featuring characters created by Gaiman, Kieth and Dringenberg

MUMMY...?

NO. IT'S ME. PAINE. DO YOU FEEL ANY BETTER?

I'M SO HOT...

AM I REALLY HERE? I HAD THIS DREAM.

I WASN'T SURE WHERE I WAS.

PAINE?

YES. I'M HERE.

HOLD MY HAND.

CONVERSION BY WILDSTORM

I THINK IT WAS A DREAM.

BUT IT SEEMED SO REAL. LIKE I WAS REALLY THERE.

"BLOOD-RED **WORMS** WERE FEEDING ON MY ARM.

"THEY DIDN'T **HURT** MUCH, BUT WHEN THEY FELL OFF AND WRIGGLED AWAY, I FOUND MY ARM WAS RIDDLED WITH **HOLES**... LIKE SOMETHING THAT HAD BEEN UNDER THE SEA FOR A LONG TIME."

"AND I RAN OUT CRYING INTO THE OPEN, BUT IT WAS **SNOWING**.

"ONLY IT **WASN'T** SNOW. IT WAS THE **SKELETONS OF BIRDS**, FALLING FROM THE SKY. THEY CRUNCHED UNDERFOOT AS I RAN.

"AND **THEN** I SAW THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO **MOVE**. **EVEN** THE ONES I HAD CRUNCHED TO **BITS**."

THE WHOLE **WORLD** WAS COVERED WITH **DEAD BIRDS**...TRYING TO **FLY**.

DON'T WORRY, OLD MAN. YOU'LL BE WELL AGAIN SOON. IT WAS JUST A *DREAM*.

I'M SO *HOT*... I WANT SOME WATER.

THERE'S NO WATER LEFT, ROWLAND.

OH.

YOUR HAND... IT'S SO *COLD*...

WELL, *THAT'S* NOT EXACTLY SURPRISING, IS IT?

NO... SORRY...

I... I KEEP THINKING I CAN HEAR PEOPLE *SINGING*.

YOU *CAN*. IT'S *SUNDAY MORNING*, ROWLAND.

IT'S *CHAPEL SERVICE*. THEY'RE SINGING *HYMNS*.

CHAPEL? BUT WHO HAVE *THEY* GOT TO PRAY TO? THAT'S SICK...

SUNDAY? YOU SAID IT WAS SUNDAY.

YES.

SIX DAYS, THEN... THAT'S *ALL* IT'S BEEN?

THAT'S RIGHT.

IT... SEEMS LIKE A *LIFETIME*...

MONDAY. SIX DAYS AGO.

EVEN WHEN EVERYONE'S GONE AWAY, THOUGHT CHARLES ROWLAND, THE SCHOOL SMELLS THE SAME...

THE SMELL OF SCHOOL IS A STRANGE, PERVASIVE THING: IT'S DISINFECTANT, WOOD POLISH AND INK, CHALK DUST, PIPE TOBACCO, BOILED CABBAGE, PAPER, FLATULENCE AND SOCKS.

THEY SAT AWKWARDLY IN ONE CORNER OF THE DINING HALL, WHILE LONG-DEAD HEADMASTERS STARED DOWN AT THEM STERNLY FROM DUSTY FORMAL PORTRAITS, HIGH ABOVE.

CHARLES ROWLAND HAD JUST TURNED THIRTEEN.

SO... WHAT DO YOU HAVE PLANNED FOR THIS ***EVENING***, THEN, ***EH***, YOUNG ROWLAND?

I DON'T ***KNOW***, SIR. I'VE GOT TO WRITE A LETTER TO MY ***FATHER***. AND ***THEN*** I'LL PROBABLY JUST GO UP TO THE LIBRARY AND ***READ***.

IF THE ***FOG*** LIFTS I'LL GO FOR A WALK.

MMPH.

GOOD, GOOD. KEEP YOURSELF OCCUPIED. THAT'S THE ***IMPORTANT*** THING. KEEP YOUR ***MIND*** OFF IT. ***I'LL*** BE IN MY STUDY. IF THERE ARE ANY ***TELEPHONE CALLS*** FOR YOU, I'LL COME AND--***MMPH***-- FIND YOU.

THANK YOU, SIR.

ROWLAND'S FATHER WAS IN KUWAIT.

EVEN SO, I ***MUST*** SAY, THIS IS ***MOST*** AWKWARD. ARE YOU ***QUITE*** SURE YOU HAVE NO RELATIVES TO WHOM YOU COULD BE SENT, FOR THE REST OF --***MMMPH***-- SCHOOL HOLIDAYS?

THERE'S NO ONE THAT I ***KNOW*** OF, SIR.

FATHER WAS GOING TO FLY ME OUT TO KUWAIT, IN THE HOLS. I'VE ***ALWAYS*** SPENT THE HOLIDAYS WITH HIM. UNTIL ***NOW***.

MMPH.

DON'T BE ***HARD*** ON THE BOY, HEADMASTER. WHAT ***I*** SAY IS, IT'S ***ALL*** THAT SADDAM HUSSEIN'S FAULT. POOR MISTER ROWLAND DIDN'T ***ASK*** TO BE A HOSTAGE, ***DID*** HE?

IT'S A GOOD THING THAT ***WE'RE*** BOTH STAYING ON AT SCHOOL OVER THE HOLIDAYS, OTHERWISE I DON'T KNOW ***WHERE*** THE LAD COULD GO.

YOU'RE ***RIGHT***, OF COURSE, MISS GRIBBLE.

OF ***COURSE*** I AM. AND ***ROWLAND*** CAN KEEP HIMSELF ***OCCUPIED***. CAN'T YOU, DEAR?

YES, MATRON.

THAT'S ***RIGHT***, LOVE. IF YOU GET BORED, COME ON UP TO THE ***SAN***.-- I'LL MAKE YOU A CUP OF TEA, AND WE CAN HAVE A BIT OF A ***NATTER***.

YES, MATRON.

RIGHT. NOW, YOU RUN ALONG. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE PLATES. ALFRED WILL CLEAN UP LATER.

ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU, MATRON. THANK YOU, SIR.

REV. A.N. PARKINSON, M.A. (OXON)
HEADMASTER 1901-1916

OUTSIDE, IT WAS COLD: THE DAMP WINTER AIR HUNG IN A WET MIST OVER ST. HILARION'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS, OVER THE WORLD. CHARLES ROWLAND SHIVERED.

FOUNDED IN 1802, A BOARDING SCHOOL FOR THE SONS OF ARMY OFFICERS...

THE SCHOOL NOW OFFERED EDUCATION TO ANYONE WHO COULD AFFORD IT; PARTICULARLY TO THOSE WHO LIVED ABROAD BUT WANTED THEIR SONS EDUCATED ON BRITISH SOIL.

CHARLES ROWLAND HAD BEEN HERE FOR A YEAR AND A HALF; SINCE HIS FATHER LEFT THE COUNTRY.

HIS FATHER WAS AN ARCHITECT, A TALL, NERVOUS MAN, WHO DESIGNED HOSPITALS.

HIS MOTHER WAS LONG DEAD.

HE WALKED OVER TO THE EMPTY LIBRARY, COMPOSING A LETTER IN HIS HEAD, TO HIS FATHER.

IT WAS THE SAME LETTER HE HAD WANTED TO WRITE FOR A YEAR AND A HALF, AND NEVER HAD.

"PLEASE, DADDY.

"TAKE ME HOME."

She looked through the tattered curtain, across at the handsome face of her husband, in whose lazy blue eyes, and behind whose inane smile she could now so plainly see the strength, energy and resourcefulness --

--which had caused the Scarlet Pimpernel to be reverenced and trusted by his followers.

ROWLAND? CHARLES?

I *KNOW* THERE AREN'T ANY *LIGHTS-OUT* BELLS, WITH EVERYONE AWAY, BUT *STILL*, SPIT-SPOT, TIME FOR YOU TO GET SOME *SLEEP*, YOUNG MAN.

ALL RIGHT, MATRON.

EVEN WHEN IT'S *EMPTY*, THOUGHT CHARLES ROWLAND, YOU'RE NEVER *ALONE* IN A SCHOOL.

IT BELONGS TO ALL THOSE *DEAD* PEOPLE. ALL THE *OTHER* KIDS. THE ONES WHO SAT AT YOUR *DESK*, OR SLEPT IN YOUR *BED*, OR RAN DOWN THE CORRIDORS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

THEY NEVER GO AWAY.

EVEN WHEN YOU'RE *ALONE*--

--YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

...PAINE? WHAT WAS IT LIKE? AFTER YOU DIED?

NOT VERY NICE. I WENT TO HELL.

I THINK IT WAS HELL.

IT WAS LIKE A NIGHTMARE. THE KIND WHERE YOU KNOW IT'S A NIGHTMARE BUT YOU STILL CAN'T WAKE YOURSELF UP.

IT WAS JUST CORRIDORS.

"AND I WAS HURRYING DOWN THESE CORRIDORS, BECAUSE I KNEW I WAS LATE FOR SOMETHING, BUT I COULDN'T QUITE REMEMBER WHAT.

"AND THEN I REALIZED THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING BEHIND ME. SOMETHING HORRIBLE. BUT IT WAS ALWAYS ONE OR TWO BENDS OF THE CORRIDOR BEHIND. AND EVEN THOUGH IT WASN'T MAKING ANY NOISE I KNEW IT WAS ALWAYS THERE.

"AND IF I STARTED TO RUN IT WOULD GET ME.

"SO I JUST KEPT WALKING, AS FAST AS I COULD. DOWN THESE CORRIDORS. WITH SOMETHING SILENTLY WALKING BEHIND ME. SOMETHING SAD AND LONELY AND TERRIBLE.

"SOMETHING THAT HAD ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD...

HOW... HOW LONG DID THIS GO ON FOR?

WHAT YEAR ARE WE IN NOW?

1990.

ABOUT 75 YEARS, I SUPPOSE. BUT IT SEEMED FAR LONGER.

...PAINE?

YES.

I'M ...I'M NOT AFRAID OF DYING.

YOU SHOULD BE.

TUESDAY. FIVE DAYS AGO.

CHARLES ROWLAND WENT DOWN FOR BREAKFAST, BUT THERE WAS NOBODY THERE, AND NO BREAKFAST IN SIGHT.

PUZZLED AND HUNGRY, HE WENT TO HIS LOCKER, AND GOT OUT HIS LAST PACKET OF CHOCOLATE DIGESTIVE BISCUITS.

THEN HE WALKED OUTSIDE, AND SAT ON THE WAR MEMORIAL, AND ATE THE WHOLE PACKET.

THE **MISTS** STILL HUNG LOW AROUND THE SCHOOL; THEY HAD SWALLOWED THE PLAYING FIELDS, AND THE PAVILION, AND THE ART ROOMS.

IN MEMORY OF THOSE BOYS FROM • ST. HILARION'S • WHO LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR (1914–1918)

ANDREWS, R.M.
AWCOCK, G.C.
BARROW, L.T.
BEETLE, J.
BLEEK, T.L.
BRUNT-SMITH, K.W.
CHEESEMAN, N.K.
COOK, S.
CROTTY, R.R.
CUTHBERTSON, S.M.L.W.
DAVIES, P.

ROWLAND WAS COLD, AND HIS HAIR AND SKIN FELT DAMP.

AT LUNCHTIME, WHEN NO ONE APPEARED IN THE DINING HALL, HE WENT UP TO THE HEADMASTER'S STUDY.

KNOCK KNOCK

COME!

HMMPH. *THEODORE*, WHO'S YOUR LITTLE *FRIEND*?

AH. *ROWLAND*. *YES*. ROWLAND, THIS IS MY *MOTHER*. *MOTHER*, THIS IS *ROWLAND*.

ER... HELLO.

HOW DO YOU DO, YOUNG MAN?

VERY WELL, THANKS.

UM, HOW ARE *YOU*?

DEAD.

I DIED IN JANUARY, 1942. UPON MY DEATH I FOUND MYSELF IN *HELL*. THIS DID NOT COME *ENTIRELY* AS A SURPRISE TO ME.

THEODORE'S *FATHER*, WHO *OUTLIVED* ME, HAD QUITE *RUINED* MY NERVES AND CONSTITUTION BY *COMPELLING* ME TO SUBMIT TO CERTAIN *HUNNISH PRACTICES* IN THE *MARITAL* BED.

I SUPPOSE I *COULD* HAVE ASKED FOR A *DIVORCE*. BUT HOW WOULD *THAT* HAVE LOOKED?

I COULD *NOT* HAVE STOOD UP THERE AND TOLD A *JUDGE* THE *REVOLTING* THINGS THAT THEODORE'S FATHER *FORCED* ME TO DO.

I *BANNED* HIM FROM MY *BEDROOM*; AND HE *SLAKED* HIS UNNATURAL LUSTS UPON THE *HOUSEMAID*.

AS I *SAID*; I WENT TO *HELL*. WHERE I WAS PUNISHED *PAINFULLY*, AND AT *LENGTH*.

PUNISHED AND *PUNISHED* AND *PUNISHED*.

THEODORE? *WHAT* DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING? *REVOLTING HABIT!*

MMPH. MOTHER, I *AM* HEADMASTER.

YOU ARE *NOTHING* OF THE KIND. YOU'RE MOTHER'S *LITTLE BOY*.

THAT'S RIGHT, MOTHER. *SORRY*, MOTHER.

STRANGE PEOPLE, THOUGHT CHARLES ROWLAND. HE FOUND HIMSELF WONDERING ABOUT INSANITY; BUT ADULTS WERE STRANGE, AND HE HAD FEW CRITERIA BY WHICH TO JUDGE THEM.

TROUBLED, HE HEADED FOR THE SANATORIUM, TO TALK TO THE MATRON.

CHARLES? HELLO, DEAR. COME *IN*. I'VE GOT SOME *CHILDREN* TO INTRODUCE YOU TO. I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM FOR *SO* LONG...

WELL, *ONE* OF THEM I NEVER *REALLY* SAW AT *ALL*.

NOW, *THIS* IS *VERONICA*. SHE DIED A *LONG* TIME AGO. SHE WAS A *COT DEATH*, MY LITTLE DARLING. AND WE PUT HER IN THE *GROUND*.

BUT I *KNEW* SHE'D COME BACK TO HER MUMMY. TO HER *MUMMY* AND HER *BABY BROTHER*...

I... I *THINK* IT'S HER BROTHER.

IT... IT NEVER ACTUALLY GOT *BORN*. I WAS ONLY *SIXTEEN*. I CAUGHT *GERMAN MEASLES*... AND...

SAY HELLO TO *CHARLES*, BABY.

BROTHER?

HELLO... CHARLES...

CHARLES? DON'T YOU WANT TO *PLAY* WITH MY *BABIES*?

CHARLES?

CHARLES ROWLAND RETURNED TO THE DORMITORY, HUNGRY AND SCARED. THAT EVENING HE STARED AT THE MIST, AS NIGHT FELL.

HE WATCHED AS ALFRED, THE SCHOOL GROUNDS-MAN, RAN PAST, WAILING SOFTLY, PURSUED BY A WOMAN AND A CHILD. THE MISTS SWALLOWED THE THREE OF THEM; HE SAW NONE OF THEM AGAIN.

HE SAT UP IN BED THAT NIGHT, HUNGRY AND FRIGHTENED; NOBODY CAME TO TURN OFF THE LIGHTS.

HE LET THEM BURN.

AND EVENTUALLY, CHARLES ROWLAND FELL ASLEEP.

WHY ARE YOU ... UP HERE? I MEAN, WHY DID YOU HIDE IN THE *ATTIC*?

BECAUSE MY *BONES* ARE UP HERE. IN THAT TRUNK. *SEE*? THIS IS WHERE I *DIED*.

THEY HID IT HERE. NO ONE *EVER* FOUND OUT.

HONESTLY-- I DON'T THINK THEY COULD HAVE *LOOKED* VERY HARD!

ALL THEIR STUFF IS STILL HERE. THEY *HARDLY* EVEN COVERED THEIR *TRACKS*. YOU CAN STILL SEE THE *CIRCLE* THEY DREW ON THE *FLOOR* OVER THERE ...

THIS WAS WHERE THEY USED TO *COME*, YOU SEE.

AT *NIGHT*. TRYING TO RAISE *DEVILS* THAT *NEVER CAME*.

THEY'D DRESS UP, AND THEY'D *DO* STUFF. THEY'D KILL *FROGS* AND *RABBITS* AND *CATS*...

AND YOU.

AND ME.

WEDNESDAY. FOUR DAYS AGO.

GOD, IT'S A BUG!

YUCK! A BUG.

WAKE THE BUG UP, CHEESEY.

WHAT'S YOUR PATHETIC NAME, BUG?

OW!

GOD, WHAT A SUB-HUMAN MORON. COME ON, SCUMBUG. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

OWWW! PLEASE! IT'S CHARLES ROWLAND.

THAT'S BETTER, BUG. I'M CHEESEMAN.

I'M BARROW.

I'M SKINNER. WE'RE OLD BOYS.

VERY OLD. HEE HEE HEE.

YOU THREE! YOU SILLY BOYS! I KNOW YOU THREE, DON'T THINK I DON'T! GET AWAY FROM THAT BOY.

BARROW, CHEESEMAN, AND... HMM, SKINNER, ISN'T IT?

YES, HEADMASTER. SORRY, HEADMASTER.

I NEVER TRUSTED YOU THREE. YOU DID SOMETHING TO THAT BOY, DIDN'T YOU? THE ONE WHO DISAPPEARED.

NOT US, SIR. NO, SIR.

LIARS. STILL, IT'S ALL HISTORY NOW.

ASSEMBLY IN TEN MINUTES IN THE MAIN HALL. AND YOU-- LIVE BOY!--CLEAN YOURSELF UP!

Y-YES, SIR.

WE CAN WAIT, LITTLE BUG. WE CAN WAIT.

...FOR THOSE BOYS BEFORE OR AFTER MY TIME, MY NAME IS PARKINSON. I WAS HEADMASTER HERE FROM 1901 UNTIL MY DEATH IN 1916.

AND I AM HEADMASTER HERE TODAY.

WE EXIST, AS THE ORIENTALS WOULD HAVE IT, IN INTERESTING TIMES...

HOWEVER, DESPITE ***ANY*** TRIBULATIONS WE MIGHT HAVE EXPERIENCED, WE ARE ***ALL*** NOW BACK AT ***SCHOOL***. AT THE ***OLD*** SCHOOL.

AND I WILL NOT TOLERATE ***SLACKNESS***, OR ***LACK*** OF ***DISCIPLINE***, FROM ***ANY*** OF YOU.

EVIL LITTLE BOYS.

YOU ***ALL DIED HERE***. OR HAD ***NO*** PLACE ELSE TO WHICH YOU COULD ***RETURN***.

IT SEEMS THAT I AM THE ***ONLY*** MASTER WHO HAS RESUMED HIS ***DUTIES*** AT ST. HILARION'S.

VERY ***WELL***, EVIL LITTLE BOYS. ***I*** AM THE ***ONLY*** MASTER.

I WILL TEACH YOU WHAT I ***LEARNED***.

IN HELL I LEARNED ***SO MANY*** THINGS.

YOU, BOY. THE BOY ***BLUBBING***. FRONT ROW. WHAT'S YOUR ***NAME***?

MOULD, SIR. SIMON MOULD, SIR.

WHEN WERE YOU HERE?

I DIED IN 1953, SIR. I HUNG MYSELF, SIR. I'M SORRY, SIR. I DIDN'T MEAN TO, SIR.

OF ***COURSE*** YOU MEANT TO, YOU ***SILLY*** LITTLE BOY. NOW, STOP ***BLUBBING***. OR I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO ***BLUB*** ABOUT.

I WILL SPEND ***TODAY*** DRAWING UP A ***TIMETABLE*** FOR THE SCHOOL; ***SO THIS*** DAY WILL BE DEVOTED TO ***SILENT STUDY***. I'LL WANT TO HEAR ***SILENCE*** FROM ***ALL*** OF YOU.

WHAT'S THE ***POINT***? I MEAN, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO ***STUDY***?

DEAD LANGUAGES?

AAGH!

WAK!

P!

YOU WILL MIND YOUR MANNERS, BOY. WHO ARE YOU?

PETER HINCHCLIFFE, SIR. I CHOKED ON MY OWN VOMIT IN 1977, SIR. BOOZE AND PILLS.

GET YOUR HAIR CUT, HINCHCLIFFE.

YOU ARE ***SCHOOLBOYS***.

YOU ARE AT ***SCHOOL***.

YOU COME TO SCHOOL TO ***STUDY***.

THEREFORE, YOU WILL ***STUDY***.

MENS SANA IN CORPORE MORTUA. EH, BOYS? "A ***HEALTHY MIND*** IN A ***DEAD BODY***..."

CHARLES ROWLAND SAT, HUNGRY, IN A ROOM SURROUNDED BY DEAD BOYS, AND TRIED TO FOCUS ON HIS TEXT-BOOK.

Carpe Diem

AFTER A WHILE HE BECAME AWARE THAT NO ONE ELSE IN THE ROOM WAS BREATHING.

IN THE AFTERNOON, THE NEW HEADMASTER SENT THE BOYS DOWN TO THE SCHOOL LAKE, TO BATHE.

CHARLES FELT HIS LIPS TURNING BLUE. HIS FINGERS AND TOES BECAME NUMB. NO ONE ELSE SEEMED TO NOTICE THE COLD.

THERE WAS NO FOOD THAT NIGHT.

AFTER LIGHTS OUT, WHEN THE OTHER BOYS WERE LAID OUT IN THEIR BEDS, CHARLES CREPT OUT OF THE DORMITORY, DRIVEN BY HUNGER.

WELL, *LOOK* WHO'S SNEAKING OUT OF THE DORM AFTER *LIGHTS-OUT*, CHEESEY. IT'S THE *NEW* BUG.

WE *SAID* WE COULD WAIT, NEW BUG.

WE DON'T *LIKE* YOU, NEW BUG. WE THINK YOU'RE *PATHETIC*.

WE'RE GOING TO MAKE YOU SORRY YOU WERE EVER *BORN*...

THREE AGAINST ONE'S NOT FAIR.

FAIR? WHAT'S *FAIR*?

CHEESEMAN WAS *KILLED* IN THE *TRENCHES*, AFTER HE WAS EXPELLED. HE WAS *ONLY* SEVENTEEN. *BARROW* AND *I* HAD ALREADY DIED OF *DIPHTHERIA*.

WAS *THAT* FAIR? WE WERE *ONLY KIDS*.

WE SACRIFICED A *BOY*. ALL *THREE* OF US. TO THE *DEVIL*. WE *DID* STUFF FROM *OLD BOOKS*. WE DID THINGS YOU WOULDN'T *BELIEVE*.

BUT WHEN WE WENT TO *HELL*...THEY DIDN'T *CARE*. THEY HADN'T EVEN *KNOWN*. THEY--THEY *LAUGHED* AT US.

THAT'S NOT WHAT *I* CALL FAIR.

ALL THE *TROUBLE* WE WENT THROUGH WITH THE LITTLE *BRAT*. DRINKING HIS *BLOOD*. HIDING THE *CORPSE*. *STEALING* THE *HOST* FROM THE CHAPEL...

...AND *NOBODY* IN *HELL* GAVE A *TOSS*.

WE BURNED ANYWAY.

JUST LIKE *YOU'RE* GOING TO, BUG.

SAY "I'M JUST A PATHETIC SNOTTY LITTLE BUG, NOT FIT TO LICK THE SHIT FROM YOUR ARSES."

GO ON. SAY IT.

LET ME--GO--YOU--BASTARDS.

WHEN THE--HEADMASTER--CATCHES YOU--YOU'LL BE--IN TROUBLE...

WHAT'S HE GOING TO DO TO US, THEN, BUG? EH?

KILL US?

AAAH!

NOW, SAY IT.

I'M A... I'M A...

UHN.

BLOODY HELL, FELLOWS. HE'S OUT COLD ALREADY. WE'D HARDLY STARTED.

IN OUR DAY A GOOD NEW BUG WOULD LAST FOR MUCH LONGER THAN THAT.

REMEMBER SOMERVILLE? OR BARTLETT-JONES? OR THE YATES TWINS?

THOSE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

HAPPIEST DAYS OF OUR LIVES...

COME ON, OLD FELLOW. COME ON. YOU'VE GOT TO GET UP.

PLEASE.

PLEASE... DON'T HURT ME...

NOT ANY... MORE...

IT'S ALL RIGHT. BUCK UP, NOW. NOBODY'S GOING TO HURT YOU. HONEST.

THURSDAY.

CHARLES ROWLAND SPENT THE NEXT DAY UNCONSCIOUS ON THE FLOOR OF THE ATTIC, ONE OF MANY TO BE FOUND BENEATH THE ROOFS OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

FRIDAY.

CHARLES ROWLAND WAS DELIRIOUS; HE TALKED TO PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT THERE, MUTTERED SNATCHES OF GIBBERISH AND FRAGMENTS OF NURSERY RHYMES.

HIS RESCUER, EDWIN PAINE (1901-1914), TENDED HIM AS BEST HE COULD.

SATURDAY.

ROWLAND REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, ALTHOUGH HE WAS WEAK AND IN PAIN.

THE SKIN ON HIS BACK WAS PEELING, AND HIS SWEATER WAS MATTED WITH PUS.

PAINE OFFERED TO MOVE HIM TO THE SANATORIUM, BUT HE DIDN'T WANT TO GO.

AND ON SUNDAY...

PAINE?...

HAVE THEY STOPPED SINGING?

YES.

THAT'S GOOD...

I THOUGHT MAYBE...

...IT WAS ME...

HELLO, CHARLES.

TIME TO GO.

ON SUNDAY, CHARLES ROWLAND DIED.

IS THAT ME?

GOSH. I LOOK *TERRIBLE.*

NAH-- YOUR BODY DOESN'T LOOK *THAT* BAD. I'VE SEEN *MUCH* WORSE.

OKAY, CHARLES. ENOUGH SIGHTSEEING. WE HAVE TO *GO* NOW.

WHAT ABOUT *PAINE?*

IT'S *YOU* I'M HERE FOR, CHARLES. NOT HIM.

IT'S *FINE*, ROWLAND. DON'T WORRY ABOUT *ME*. *YOU* GO.

I TOOK HIM *ALREADY*, CHARLES. AND HE'S *STILL* DEAD. NOW IT'S *YOUR* TURN.

NO.

IF *HE'S* NOT GOING, THEN *NEITHER* AM I. HE'S MY *FRIEND.*

I *DON'T* HAVE *TIME* TO *ARGUE*, CHARLES. THERE'S TOO MUCH GOING *ON* RIGHT NOW...

LOOK. *YOU'RE* COMING WITH ME. *HE* STAYS.

TAKE MY HAND, CHARLES.

I'M NOT GOING *ANYWHERE.*

NOT WITHOUT *HIM*. I'M SORRY. I'M JUST *NOT* GOING.

CHARLES...

OKAY. *OKAY.* *FINE.* *STAY.*

UM. *THANK YOU.* I *REALLY* MEAN IT. *THANKS.*

YEAH. WELL, I'LL PICK YOU UP AS SOON AS THINGS ARE LESS CRAZY, CHARLES.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES.

THERE REALLY ISN'T *TIME* TO ARGUE ABOUT THIS -- AND I JUST *DON'T* HAVE THE *ENERGY*. I'VE GOT TOO MANY *OTHER* THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT. STAY IF YOU *HAVE* TO. I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU *LATER*.

SO, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO **NOW**?

I'M NOT SURE. BUT I CAN TELL YOU WHAT WE'RE **NOT** GOING TO DO. WE'RE NOT STAYING **HERE** ANY LONGER.

HUH?

LEAVE THE **ATTIC**?

BUT WE **CAN'T**. I MEAN, MY **BONES** ARE UP HERE.

WELL, SO ARE **MINE**.

NOT TO **MENTION** MY **FLESH** AND **HAIR** AND **STUFF**. BUT I DON'T SEE **WHY** THAT MEANS I HAVE TO **SIT AROUND** UP HERE UNTIL **SHE** COMES **BACK** FOR US.

ANYWAY, I DON'T FEEL **ILL** ANY MORE. I FEEL **FINE**.

DEAD, BUT **FINE**.

COME ON.

ROWLAND. I'M **SCARED**.

LOOK AT IT **THIS** WAY: DO YOU WANT TO BE A **GHOST** IN AN **ATTIC** ALL YOUR LIFE?

YES. **YOU'RE RIGHT**. IT'S PART OF **GROWING UP**, I SUPPOSE...

YOU **ALWAYS** HAVE TO LEAVE **SOMETHING** BEHIND YOU.

WHAT ABOUT ALL THE *REST* OF THEM?

DO YOU THINK *THEY'LL* EVER HAVE TO GO BACK TO HELL?

GO BACK? I DON'T KNOW. I THINK *HELL'S* SOMETHING YOU *CARRY AROUND* WITH YOU. NOT SOMEWHERE YOU *GO.*

NOW THEN, THEODORE.

MOTHER'S GOING TO TELL YOU SOME MORE OF THE *HORRID* THINGS YOUR FATHER DID TO HER.

AFTER ALL, WE *DON'T* WANT YOU GROWING UP LIKE YOUR FATHER, *DO* WE?

NO, MOTHER.

OW! CHEESEMAN! YOU BRUTE! STOP IT!

SORRY, BARROW, OLD MAN. BUT WITH NONE OF THE LITTLE TARTS TO FAG FOR ME AND SKINNER, IT'S GOING TO HAVE TO BE *YOU.* WE *HAVE* TO HAVE OUR LITTLE *FUN.*

YAARGH! YOU...

LANGUAGE, BARROW. LANGUAGE.

THEY'RE DOING THE *SAME* THINGS THEY *ALWAYS* DID. THEY'RE DOING IT TO *THEMSELVES. THAT'S HELL.*

MANSON, PUT THAT AWAY! JUST BECAUSE I'M NOT LOOKING DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T SEE YOU!

Schedul of Classes

"HIGHER THAN HIMSELF CAN NO MAN THINK," -*TUPPER!*-- AS THE LEARNED PROTAGORAS ONCE SAID.

COGITO ERGO SUM, DESCARTES' MAXIM, WAS UNPHILOSOPHICAL IN THE EXTREME. WHY? BECAUSE HE ASSUMES THE EXISTENCE OF THE THINKER. --*STOP THAT, CONNELLY!*-- HE MIGHT AS WELL HAVE SAID THAT A ROSE IS RED, AND THEREFORE IT EXISTS.

I DON'T *THINK* I AGREE. I THINK MAYBE HELL *IS* A PLACE.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY *ANYWHERE* FOREVER.

SO WHERE ARE WE GOING NOW?

I DON'T KNOW. AWAY FROM *HERE*. I'M *SICK* OF THIS PLACE. THERE'S A WHOLE *WORLD* OUT THERE.

I BET WE'VE GOT A *WHILE* BEFORE THEY SORT THIS MESS OUT, AND SHE COMES BACK TO GET US.

I'M GAME IF *YOU* ARE.

ERR. YOU CAN CALL ME *EDWIN*, YOU KNOW. IF YOU *WANT* TO.

OH. FAIR ENOUGH. I'M *CHARLES*.

CHARLES? WHAT WILL YOUR *FATHER* THINK ABOUT *YOU* BEING *DEAD*?

HE'LL PROBABLY BE *RELIEVED*. I DON'T THINK HE *EVER* LIKED BEING A *PARENT*.

AND MY *MUM* WON'T MIND. *SHE'S DEAD ALREADY*, SO SHE WON'T BE *PREJUDICED*.

HOW *LONG* DO YOU THINK WE'VE *GOT*? UNTIL SHE CATCHES UP WITH US *AGAIN*?

I DUNNO.

BUT WE MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THE *MOST* OF IT. JUST *TAKE* IT AS IT *COMES*.

DEATH, YOU MEAN? OR *LIFE*?

EITHER. *BOTH*. ANYWAY, I THINK WE'VE *LEARNED ALL* WE'RE GOING TO AT *SCHOOL*.

NOW: LET'S SEE WHAT *LIFE'S* GOT TO OFFER US...

To Be Continued.

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES
#1 BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

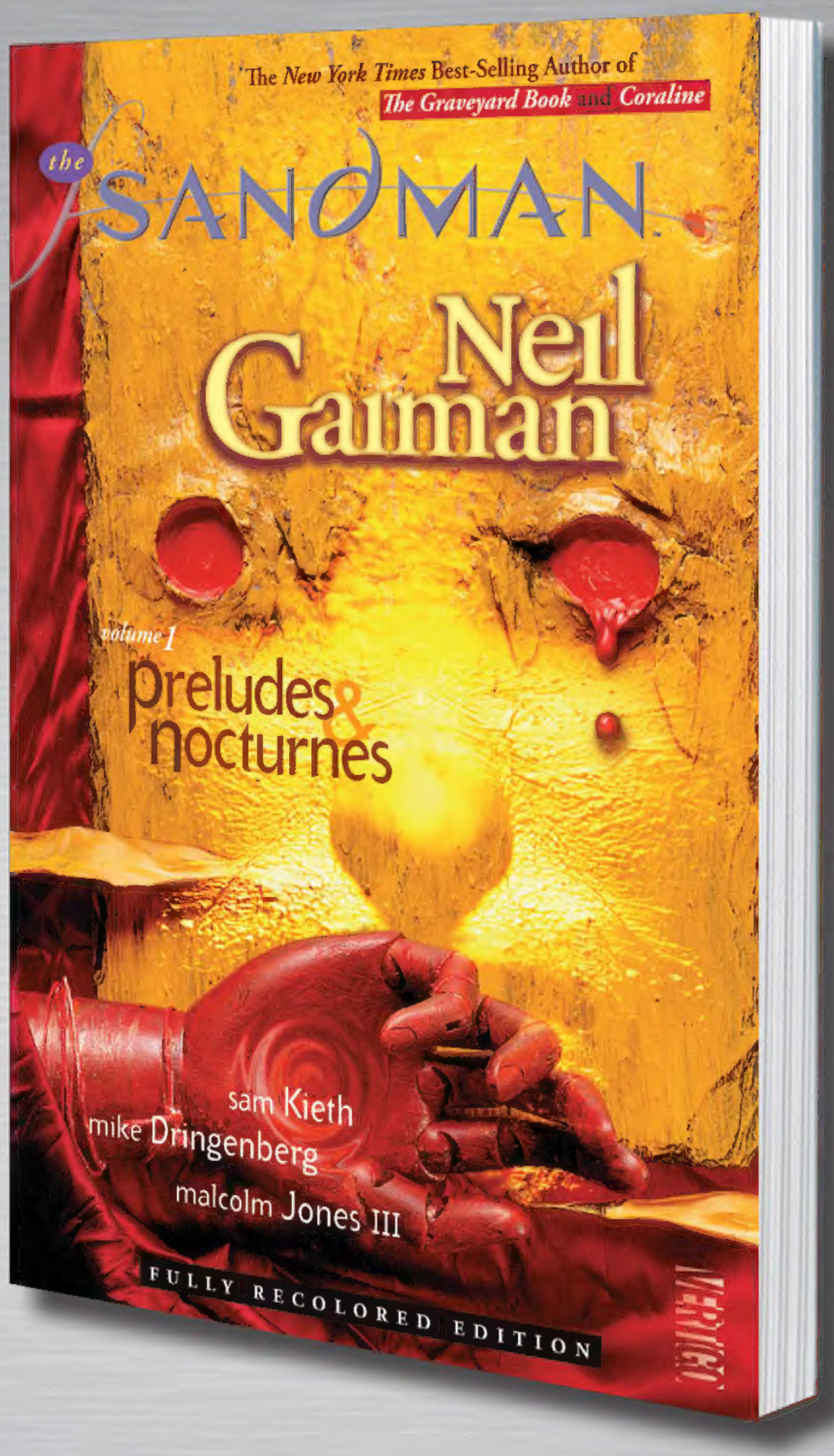
NEIL GAIMAN

"What Gaiman has written is a comics masterpiece."
– PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

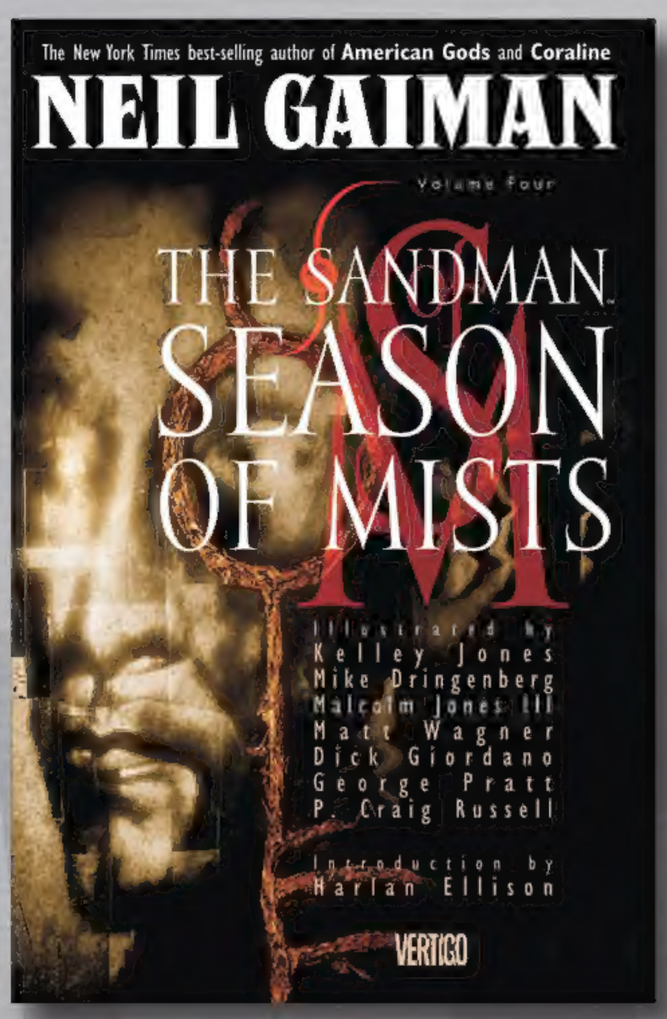
"SANDMAN just might be the smartest comic book ever written."
– USA TODAY

"The landmark comic-book series that actually made death seem cool."
– ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

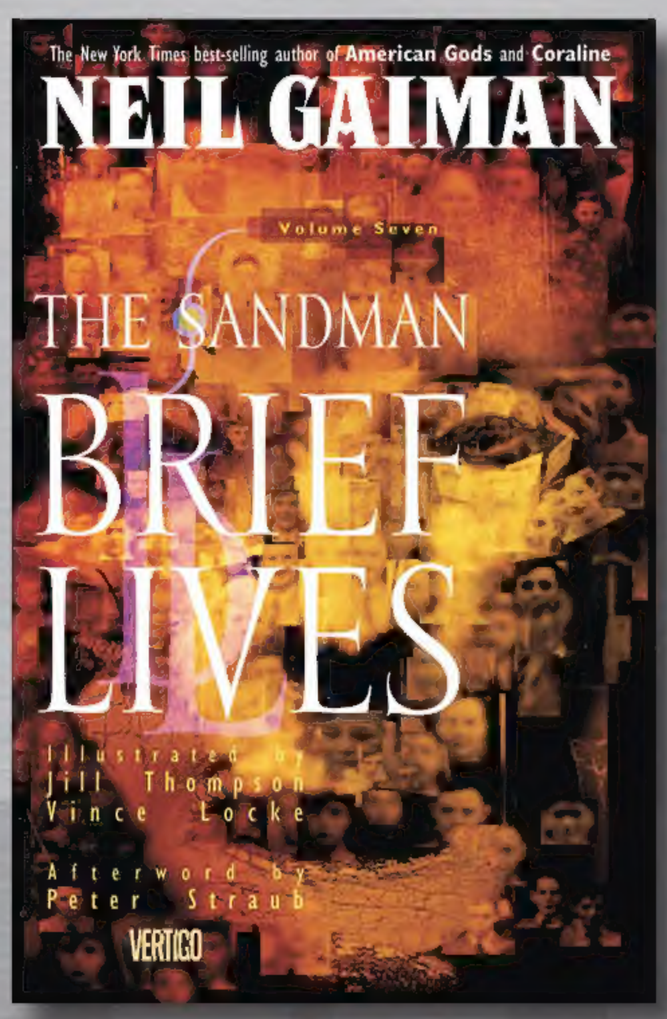
"This is the stuff dreams are made of."
– IGN.com



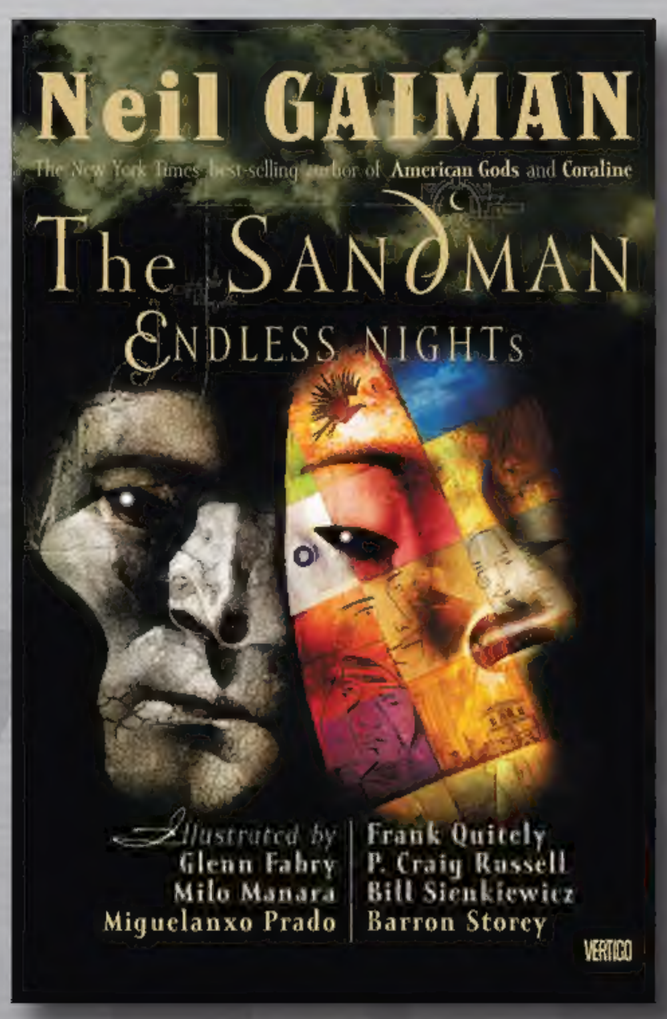
THE SANDMAN VOL. 4:
SEASON OF MISTS



THE SANDMAN VOL. 7:
BRIEF LIVES



THE SANDMAN:
ENDLESS NIGHTS



Use the **BUY IN PRINT** feature to find a comics shop near you.
Check back here every week for **NEW DIGITAL RELEASES**!

Suggested for Mature Readers

E
E
M
P
I
R
SON OF ULTRON